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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 STOCKHOLM 000452

SIPDIS

EUR FOR NB, CARC, AND RUS

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SW

SUBJECT: U.S.-SWEDEN PLAN WAY FORWARD FOR ABKHAZIA CONFLICT

REF: STATE 62452

Classified By: A/DCM ROBOT HILTON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) & (D).

11. (U) Participants:

U.S.

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Matthew Bryza, EUR Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Michael Carpenter, Conflicts Advisor  
Casey Christensen, Political Counselor  
Briana Olsen, Deputy Political Counselor (notetaker)

Sweden

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Carl Bildt, Foreign Minister  
Frank Belfrage, State Secretary  
Bjorn Lyrvall, Political Director  
Diana Janse, Political Advisor

12. (C) Summary: On June 10, EUR DAS Bryza met with Swedish FM Carl Bildt and other officials to develop a plan of action to de-escalate tensions between Georgia and Russia over Abkhazia. They discussed how Germany is complicating the peace process by requiring that every step, including such matters as EU High Representative Solana,s June 6 visit to Sukhumi, be cleared in advance with Moscow. Bildt and Bryza also agreed on the importance of the U.S. and EU showing a unified front in calling for Russia to de-escalate its military posture in Abkhazia. They discussed future steps, such as developing a joint Abkhaz-Georgian police force with European advisors and/or monitors and the possibility of holding future meetings between the Georgians and Abkhaz in Sweden. End summary.

EU Responses to the Conflict

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13. (C) Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt told EUR DAS Matthew Bryza that it is difficult to secure European consensus on reviving the Abkhazia peace process as many EU members are non-committal over Abkhazia, for fear of angering Russia; Germany, France and the United Kingdom are retarding and complicating the conflict resolution process by being overly sensitive to Moscow,s concerns. Solana, according to Bildt, is "on-board" as long as Saakashvili does not go on the offensive. Political Director Lyrvall said EU support for Georgia and plans for peace were conditional on having next steps rooted within the UN Friends framework. Bildt suggested that the EU needed to be more proactive and take up the issue of visa facilitation for Abkhaz holding Russian passports, who currently have an easier time receiving visas than Abkhaz (or Georgians) traveling on Georgian passports. Bryza and Bildt agreed that the EU had to take a more

forceful stand against the argument articulated by Russian officials, such as Mironov and Kenyakin, that Russia could use military force to protect its citizens in Abkhazia. How would the EU react, Bildt asked rhetorically, if the Serbs used the same argument for their citizens in Mitrovica?

14. (C) Bildt said Saakashvili is obsessed with Abkhazia, and believes the Russians will attack the Kodori Valley this summer with the paratroopers currently stationed near Tkvarcheli, which in turn would block Georgia's future ability to defend Abkhazia. He said Saakashvili might therefore be planning to mount a pre-emptive attack on these Russian forces from the Kodori Valley. In Lyrvall's opinion, Saakashvili believes the Russians sent additional troops to Abkhazia to scuttle the potential for a NATO MAP offer to Georgia in December, with Medvedev telling Saakashvili bluntly that there would be no movement towards a resolution of the conflict until Georgia's NATO aspirations were taken off the table.<sup>8</sup>

#### Calming the Russians

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15. (C) Bryza and Bildt agreed that the West must calm down the Georgians and create a unified front towards Russia. Bildt suggested that, if needed, the West could play the card of the Sochi Olympics by announcing the potential dangers of hosting the Olympics a hundred kilometers from an unresolved, potentially violent conflict. Such a play could link Russia's violation of international law to its role as the Olympic host. Bildt doubted the International Olympic Committee would do anything, but believes the threat of

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embarrassment might push Russia to back down. Additionally, Bildt said, the West might get Russia's attention by applying travel and/or economic sanctions on foreign entities financially benefiting from business dealings with unrecognized and unregistered entities based in Abkhazia.

#### Swedish candidate for UN Chief Military Officer

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16. (C) Bildt told Bryza that Sweden would nominate a candidate to replace the UN Chief Military Officer in Abkhazia, General Khattak (Pakistan), who is leaving his post later this year. Sweden was counting on U.S. and European support for its candidate.

#### Action Plan

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17. (C) Bryza and Bildt formulated the following action plan:

- The Swedes, Balts, Poles and Czechs immediately will talk to Saakashvili to urge him not to demand that CIS peacekeepers leave Abkhazia.
- Begin discussions to develop a joint Abkhaz-Georgian police force with international (European and/or UN) oversight
- Plan a series of meetings between Georgian and Abkhazian leaders, subsequent to the June 16 meeting in Stockholm organized by a Swedish-American academic;

17. (U) This cable was cleared by Conflicts Advisor Mike Carpenter.  
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